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Ministry of Attorney General
and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism

BUILDING SAFE COMMUNITIES BY ELIMINATING RACISM

BURNABY – Government has awarded $225,000 to the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA) to work with 21 community organizers throughout B.C. through the Safe Harbour program to help eliminate racism and celebrate cultural diversity, Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism Dave Hayer announced on behalf of Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism Wally Oppal.

"Safe Harbour helps build welcoming and inclusive communities by training staff in businesses, municipalities, and community organizations to welcome diversity and help combat racism," said Hayer. "By making the Safe Harbour commitment and displaying the Safe Harbour logo, local storefronts publicly announce to their community they reject discrimination and that they are progressive organizations that proudly embrace the richness and diversity that makes up British Columbia's communities."

The program engages municipalities, businesses and organizations to be Safe Harbour locations to collaboratively build a safe and inclusive community. These locations display signage stating that they serve as sanctuaries for people who experience discrimination or harassment and briefly need a place to go.

AMSSA will work with organizations in Abbotsford, Burnaby, Burns Lake, Campbell River, Chilliwack, Cowichan Valley, Kamloops, Kelowna, Langley, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Penticton, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Richmond, Terrace, Vancouver and Victoria. Over a 12-month period, the project will consult with community organizers to develop resources specific to each community's needs. It will support community organizers in delivering training and establishing Safe Harbour locations throughout local business areas.

"This support from the BC Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Program will allow us to really move the innovative Safe Harbour model forward," said AMSSA executive director Lynn Moran. "Safe Harbour is already successful in bringing the private, public and non-profits sectors together in a common mission. Our goal is to make Safe Harbour popularly known throughout B.C. and to continue supporting local Safe Harbour organizers to engage their business and municipal partners in celebrating and protecting diversity."

The Safe Harbour program was initially developed by Nanaimo's Partners for an Inclusive Community through the community's engagement in the provincial Critical Incident Response Model in 2003. For more information about the Safe Harbour program, please visit www.safeharbour.ca.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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